

Honor

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Summary: Sub-Zero and Scorpion's MK1 confrontation, strictly within my continuity. An interlude of sorts, not meant to stand alone, but complete.

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><p>The ninja called Sub-Zero faltered.<p>

He had been praised as the best in his clan, a master of the element of water. He was the optimal choice for any mission that was to be accomplished with flying colors, yet he was losing to a specter from his past.

The Shirai Ryu ninja that Sub-Zero had once killed was the one who had challenged him to battle. Somehow, the dead assassin had made a pact with the devil and been resurrected. His skills strengthened by an overwhelming thirst for revenge, Scorpion, as the once vanquished warrior was called, had finally managed to overpower Sub-Zero.

Yet another contacting kick sent the ice ninja reeling backward into a wall. He sank to the floor, unable to stand anymore. The ninja could no longer place any weight on his right leg without experiencing his shattered ankle's protestâ€"waves of dizzying pain that made him wish to pass out. Blood from his crushed nose dripped out from underneath his formerly ice-blue mask, now stained crimson. Pain stabbed into his chest from his shattered ribs, and he struggled for every breath. Sub-Zero had never before been so severely beaten.

"I'm not finished with you yet, pathetic excuse for a warrior," Scorpion growled, echoing the exact words Sub-Zero had used, years

before when he'd been sent on one of his first missions as a full ninja.

A man had approached the Lin Kuei, ready to pay a large sum for the assassination of his rival—the very man who had ordered his assassination the day before, yet at a different clan, the Japanese Shirai Ryu. The two were petty politicians, playing their deadly little games, hoping to attain their idea of power. But, the Lin Kuei didn't care what the motive of their client was; as long as there was a payment, all was well.

Unfortunately for Sub-Zero, who had been chosen to take the seemingly simple task as a chance to prove himself, a Shirai Ryu ninja had been assigned to protect his client. He had been rather young and impetuous, revealing himself with a loud battle cry instead of silently ambushing his client's threat.

What had ensued was a short, rather one-sided fight, as Sub-Zero had been far more collected and skilled in the art of one-on-one unarmed combat, attacking with precision instead of relying solely on brute strength. Crushed and humiliated, the young Shirai Ryu ninja called Scorpion had tried to crawl away from his antagonist.

"I'm not finished with you yet, pathetic excuse for a ninja," Sub-Zero had said, reaching down at the other ninja's uniform and wrenching him to his feet. The Lin Kuei assassin had gripped Scorpion's neck, ripping off his head and simultaneously using his power to detach the other's spinal column, still attached to his head. It was a traditional Lin Kuei fatality, sometimes requested by clients for the sheer gruesomeness of the thought.

Sub-Zero hadn't needed to kill the defeated ninja. It would have been obvious who assassinated the politician, even without a witness; Lin Kuei always left behind a signature—a small bronze medallion in the shape of a crescent, bearing the Mandalorian characters for Lin Kuei, meaning _rebel silencers_ in the rarely used language. The Lin Kuei clan was originally formed by a young Mandalorian who managed to conquer a planet and most of the galaxy as well. It was a very hunted organization, but as no one knew where to find them besides the people who would never tell—clients, members, and the rest of the small village that was home to the clan—they were never caught.

Scorpion was mainly killed because Sub-Zero wished to impress the Grandmaster and Masters, and because a good rule to follow if one wishes for continued existence is _never allow an assassin to be at your back_.

After defeating his target's guard, Sub-Zero's mission was easily accomplished. He had continued to improve, eventually becoming the most reliable ninja in the clan. So naturally, when the order came for the assassination of a necromancer named Shang Tsung, Sub-Zero was chosen for the task.

However, Scorpion had shown up at the tournament, resurrected, to an extent. Satan had forced him to wear a yellow Lin Kuei uniform, a symbol that reminded him more of his defeat and attempt to retreat than it insulted Sub-Zero. And worst of all for the ice assassin, Scorpion had drastically improved.

Sub-Zero, vaguely wondering what elaborate death the specter had planned for him, watched as Scorpion removed his mask. The illusion of a normal human's face was removed, as well as the yellow plastic, leaving a completely fleshless human skull. The defeated assassin stared up at the abomination, ready to meet his demise. Scorpion leaned forward, in the direction of the ice ninja, dropping the jaw of his skull and spewing a stream of pure fire.

Sub-Zero braced himself for the heat, as a bright flash shot down to Shang Tsung's island and collided with the ice ninja. Oddly enough, though he felt no impact, he did feel as though he had been rubbing socked feet on the carpet, gathering static electricity, as he watched the hairs on his arm stand up on end.

But even more strangely, the fire being emitted from the dead man's mouth was not even singeing him. Before these thoughts had even registered, Sub-Zero felt the matter of his body vaporize, leaving just his awareness, and the unreal sensation of traveling many times faster than light.

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><p>Sub-Zero woke to find he was lying against a soft, giving surface. As he was regaining coherent thought, he began to wonder what kind of strange netherworld this was that it was extremely comfortable and not at all hot. Then he opened his eyes. To see that he was being suspended in midair. Over a boiling lake of magma.<p>

He jolted completely to awareness and fought down his panic at being so very close to such an extremely hot substance, one that completely clashed with his nature. He began to calm completely down after he realized if he was actually floating in midair, he would not be sitting on something soft. _It's a trick,_ he assured himself. _Someone has some sort of projection device that allowed them to make it seem as though there was nothing around but lava and fire._

Then he saw the shape. It was some sort of being. It resembled a person of undetectable gender and black eyes, wearing a nondescript white fighting uniform and a white mask. But something about it seemed somehow...insubstantial, like it wasn't real.

"Are you actually there or am I just dreaming?"

The figure didn't move at all, but an answer in a very alien sounding voice somehow appeared in his head. =We are not hallucination. We are Honor. We are Vyrenchi.=

Sub-Zero risked a quick glance around him. "Where are the rest of you?"

The figure shook its head. =No, only one of us here.=

Sub-Zero shook his head, trying to clear his fogged brain. "And what are you again, honorable Vyr..." He trailed off, forgetting what the bizarre creation had said.

The apparition pointed to itself and clarified its former statement. =We are Honor. Our creator named us this, as your mother named you Nei Jen. There is only one of us here. That is us. All here, except

for you, are Vyrenchi.=

"So, what are you?"

=We are Vyrenchi.= The figure appeared almost exasperated, if an illusion could. =You are Mandalorian, we are Vyrenchi.=

"What are Vyrenchi?"

=We are!=

"No!" he yelled in his frustration at dealing with this alien. "What type of beings are Vyrenchi?"

=We are made of energy. We are invisible, but we are where you see us. We are projecting this image into your mind, just as we project our voice. Also, we can change our appearance.= To demonstrate its ability, the figure randomly changed into others, Sub-Zero's teacher, his brother, the six other combatants of the Mortal Kombat tournament who were still alive when he was nearly killed, Shang Tsung, even the four-armed monster called Goro. =We have to take images from your mind,= the creature explained, =except for basic imageâ€"this one.= The figure regained its appearance as the warrior in white. =Sometimes we change our color to distinguish between different Vyrenchi, but no need. There is only one of us here.=

Sub-Zero looked around him at the extraordinary capsule. "Where am I?"

=All full of questions, are you? No doubt you are, having been taken from island to strange unknown place. This is Viri, home of Vyrenchi. It is two orbits closer to sun than Mandalore once was, so it is very hot here. You are in heat bubble, shielding you from effects of our sun. If you were not in bubble, you would melt. It is very hot here.=

The ninja looked down at the magma lake beneath him. "This place is not at all to my liking," he commented.

The white warrior hung its head. =We are sorry. This is best that we could do. We cannot go to Earth, cannot go to Outworld, and all other acceptable planets are gone. We cannot make cold bubble, or air bubble. At least Viri has air.=

"I was on Earth. You came for me."

=You were on Shang Tsung's island. There is major difference. Shang Tsung's island is not on Earth. It is nexus point joining all the Astral planes of Outworld. It is true that Vyrenchi cannot go to Outworld or Earth, but we were able to slip through to Shang Tsung's island during chaotic time of Mortal Kombat.=

"You say there is only one of you here, yet you use the pronouns 'we' and 'us'? Singular organism, multiple minds?"

Honor shook its head. =Singular organism, singular mind connected to all other Vyrenchi minds. We will not keep secret of Li Nei Jen very long. We were not supposed to interfere. Not until judges call us. We are going to be in serious trouble.=

"Why did you help, then, if you knew you'd be punished?" Sub-Zero was unused to that kind of a testimony. Lin Kuei ninjas only helped others if they, too, were also benefited by their efforts.

=We swore oath to Yuen Ming many years ago, before you were born. We broke our promise to her to help protect our home planet from Shao Kahn. Bad things happened to her and her friends. We still feel responsible. Most likely, we could have stopped rioters. We decided to protect bloodline of Yuen Ming in recompense.=

"Who are the judges?"

=If we knew, then we would not be here. We would tell them and everything would be clear, and we would fight evil. But we don't know. All we know is what little is said in prophecies. We know they are only ones who can deliver Mandalore and other planets of this galaxy, and destroy four evil figures forever, without any chance of their resurrection. The judges will call us, and we will be able to enter Earth and Outworld again. All Vyrenchi are great help in fights. We can absorb heat and energy, and take over bodies. Only way we can die is if we destroy ourselves, which even causes many evil things to die, but only evil things, not good things.=

"So you came to Shang Tsung's island, took over my body, absorbed the heat of Scorpion's fire..."

=Transformed your matter into energy, and brought you along with us.= The sun was setting, though the heat remained, emanating from the lava and fire all around. Honor turned and pointed to a blank spot in the sky. Its voice sounded very sad, suddenly. =That is where Mandalore should be, at this time of year. We miss Mandalore. We miss Yuen Ming.= It turned back around and addressed Sub-Zero. =Do you remember Mandalore?=-

"I remember marble," he answered, lightly. Immediately, a horrid sound exploded in his ears. It was somewhere between a scream and a purr, and he'd never heard anything like it before in his life.

"What was that?" he screamed in shock and pain, and the noise stopped.

=What do you mean?= The Vyrenchi seemed completely unaware of the awful screech.

"That...noise! The scream purr...really, loud thing."

Honor one again dropped his head. =We are sorry. We forgot Vyrenchi laughter is painful to non-Vyrenchi organisms. We will block out laughter from now on. You have inherited your father's humor. And, you would remember much marble, wouldn't you? You were only, what five when you left?=-

"Four. I spent a year on Edenia." Sub-Zero rubbed his temples, trying to block away the impending headache. "So what are we going to do now?"

=We could have taken you back, but Shang Tsung's island just closed. Mortal Kombat is over.=

"Excuse me?" asked Sub-Zero, angrily. "You could have taken me back but we _talked_ for so long that now you can't? That was intelligent!"

=We are sorry. We never meant to send you back until you were healed so you wouldn't be killed. We were not expecting Mortal Kombat to be over so soon. The good news is Earth isn't being invaded, so Shang Tsung was beaten. The bad news is you will have to stay here with us until judges call Vyrenchi.=

"When is that going to be?"

=We do not know. Possibly after your lifetime. Possibly never.= Sensing Sub-Zero's worsening mood, the Vyrenchi decided it was time the conversation was over. =We will leave and get you healer so you will heal properly. If the judges call us while you are here, you will need to help them fight, also. You are good fighter.= Without another word, the Vyrenchi parted, zipping away faster than a human could blink.

Sub-Zero sank down into the sides of the bubble again, suddenly feeling very tired. He looked out at the horizon and witnessed a volcano erupting with a giant explosion of fire, lava and smoke.

"This world is most definitely not to my liking."

End
file.